

Who's Caring for our Babies Now?

Revisiting the 2005 Profile of
Early Care and Education for Children Birth to Three
in North Carolina



Introduction

The last 20 years have seen a revolution in need for and usage of child care for infants and toddlers in North Carolina. As more and more women have re-entered the workforce with children under a year old, the need for child care has grown. It is estimated that 53-59% of babies under one live in a household where their mothers work. And with the work requirements associated with TANF requiring mothers to go back to work as soon as possible after the birth of their children, babies living in both poor and middle income families are faced with spending their very earliest days in a child care setting.

In North Carolina, a significant increase has occurred in the numbers of infants and toddlers in regulated child care settings over the last three years. In 2005, data from the NC Division of Child Development indicated that there were 76,461 children enrolled in child care settings under the age of three. Of these, 17,053 were under one year of age. In 2008, the number of children under the age of three had risen to 77,513; a 1.4% increase.

With so much national and state attention focused on school readiness and on helping four year olds come to school better prepared, it is important to assess what is happening for our very youngest citizens. Numerous studies have identified the first years of life as critical for setting the foundation for future learning. These studies have identified key elements in providing an environment that maximizes the chances that each young infant can reach her potential. Examples of such factors include consistency, security, predictability, focus, encouragement, and age appropriate toys or objects.¹ However, providing excellent infant/toddler child care is expensive because of the need and requirements for low teacher to child ratios and well-educated teachers.

Given these factors, it is critical to examine the status of child care for our youngest citizens. This study examines two major pieces of data to help us look at child care and children from zero to three. The first data come from the regulatory database within the NC Division of Child Development. In the first section of the report the reader will be able to look at the enrollment of infants and toddlers in child care, examine the quality of care these young children are receiving and how this compares with the care of our three to five year old children.

The second data group also comes from the NC Division of Child Development. Using data from the state subsidy program, this study examines what type of child care our poorest children receive. This information is critically important as research has repeatedly shown that birth to three are critical formative years and that child care has a profound impact specifically for children from low income families. As more and more of our poor children's parents work, these same children are in child care at an earlier age thus needing access to high quality care.

¹ The Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers, *A Guide to Cognitive Development and Learning*. California Department of Education and WestEd. Sacramento, 1995.

North Carolina Child Care Programs Serving Infants and Toddlers

This section analyzes the following research questions:

- What is the availability and usage of infant and toddler care?
- Are infants and toddlers in NC enrolled in high quality programs?
- Are child care facilities that provide early care and education to infants and toddlers different from child care facilities that provide early care and education to children 3-5 years old?
- Are these differences statewide or specific to certain regions and counties?

To answer these questions licensing and enrollment data for April 2008 were obtained from the NC Division of Child Development. Child care programs that enrolled children birth up to 36 months are compared to child care programs that enroll children three to five years old.²

This section contains the following: data source, summary of key findings, data tables showing the comparison statewide, and tables providing comparisons for each of the 18 North Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral (NC CCR&R) Regions and counties across the state (see Appendix A). In each regional data table, a column on statewide infant and toddler data is included for comparison purposes. In each county data table, a column on the regional data in which that county is located is included for comparison purposes.

Data Source

All data in this section are from the North Carolina Division of Child Development licensing and enrollment data for April 2008.

Summary of Key Findings

General Availability and Usage...

- When this study was completed in 2005, there were 76,461 children from birth to three in regulated child care settings. Currently, 77,513 children from birth to three are in regulated child care settings. This represents a 1.4% increase from 2005. During this same period, enrollment of children from three to five years of age increased by 5.6%.
- Of the 77,513 children under the age of three, 22% are infants, 35% are one-year-olds and 44% are two-year-olds.
- 74% of centers serve infants and toddlers; 97% of centers serve preschoolers.
- 87% of infants and toddlers enrolled in licensed care are in child care centers; 13% of infants and toddlers enrolled in licensed care are in child care homes.
- 40% of children birth-5 years old enrolled in licensed child care programs of all types are infants and toddlers.
- 38% of children birth-5 years old in licensed centers are infants or toddlers; 61% of children birth-5 years of age in licensed homes are infants or toddlers.

² Programs that enroll both infants and toddlers and three to five year old children were counted in both data sets.

Availability and Usage of Higher Quality Care...

- 44% of 5-star centers enroll infants and toddlers; 83% of 1-star centers enroll infants and toddlers. However, 98% of 5-star centers enroll children 3-5 years of age.
- Fewer infants and toddlers than preschoolers access high quality (4- and 5-star) child care centers. In only seven regions, 50% or more of infants and toddlers are receiving care in 4- or 5-star child care centers. In four regions 30% or less of infants and toddlers in child care are enrolled in 4- or 5-star centers (Table 1).

Table 1. Enrollment of Infants and Toddlers in Child Care Centers by Star Rating

Region	5-star	4-star	3-star	2-star	1-star	Other*
1	0%	10%	27%	27%	14%	23%
2	9%	30%	34%	11%	3%	12%
3	6%	27%	27%	7%	13%	20%
4	11%	34%	34%	5%	9%	7%
5	4%	18%	46%	15%	7%	11%
6	10%	16%	39%	15%	6%	14%
7	21%	47%	11%	5%	3%	13%
8	12%	37%	26%	5%	4%	17%
9	22%	30%	28%	1%	8%	12%
10	27%	36%	23%	7%	1%	7%
11	41%	27%	17%	6%	6%	3%
12	28%	33%	22%	5%	4%	7%
13	15%	26%	26%	7%	10%	16%
14	13%	32%	27%	9%	4%	15%
15	24%	31%	23%	8%	4%	10%
16	17%	13%	33%	14%	8%	16%
17	24%	28%	21%	6%	15%	7%
18	20%	25%	34%	5%	1%	15%
NC State	17%	30%	26%	8%	7%	12%

*Includes all programs with a GS 110-106, Provisional, Probationary, and Temporary License.

- 95% of 5-star homes enroll infants and toddlers; 93% of 1-star homes enroll infants and toddlers. Unlike centers, a lower percent (84%) of 5-star homes enroll children three to five years of age than enroll infants and toddlers.
- Fewer infants and toddlers than preschoolers access high quality (4- and 5-star) child care homes. In only six regions, 40% or more of infants and toddlers are receiving care in 4- or 5-star child care homes, but none of them exceed 46%. In seven regions 30% or less of infants and toddlers are enrolled in 4- or 5-star homes (Table 2).

Region	5-star	4-star	3-star	2-star	1-star	Other
1	5%	23%	25%	24%	23%	0%
2	15%	11%	24%	28%	19%	2%
3	15%	22%	19%	20%	23%	0%
4	9%	19%	13%	30%	27%	1%
5	9%	23%	25%	18%	24%	0%
6	15%	19%	24%	29%	13%	0%
7	16%	27%	24%	13%	20%	1%
8	34%	12%	15%	13%	25%	1%
9	20%	21%	14%	17%	25%	2%
10	13%	12%	12%	44%	20%	0%
11	24%	16%	12%	17%	30%	0%
12	9%	12%	18%	34%	26%	1%
13	16%	16%	22%	20%	25%	0%
14	13%	25%	19%	19%	22%	2%
15	16%	27%	25%	16%	14%	2%
16	9%	18%	23%	32%	19%	0%
17	9%	18%	15%	20%	39%	0%
18	13%	32%	12%	22%	22%	0%
NC State	14%	21%	20%	21%	23%	0%

- Region 1 has the lowest percent (19%) and Region 7 has the highest percent (52%) of 4- and 5-star homes and centers that enroll infants and toddlers (Table 3).
- 46% of infants and toddlers are enrolled in 4- or 5-star centers or homes as compared to 58% of children three to five years old. This is an increase of 6% and 9% respectively, from enrollment in 2005 (Table 4).
- In every region the percent of infants and toddlers enrolled in 4- or 5-star programs is lower than preschoolers (Table 4).
- Region 1 has the lowest percent (13%) and Region 7 has the highest percent (66%) of infants and toddlers who are enrolled in 4- and 5- star programs.
- In 2005, only eight regions enrolled 50% or more preschoolers in 4- or 5-star programs. In 2008, fourteen regions enrolled 50% or more of preschoolers in 4- or 5-star programs of all types. This enrollment in quality programs is true of only six regions for infants and toddlers in 2008.

Table 3. Percent of Programs (Centers and Homes) with a 4- or 5-Star License Serving Indicated Age Groups

Region	Infants/Toddlers		Preschoolers	
	2005	2008	2005	2008
1	24%	19%	27%	27%
2	32%	26%	35%	29%
3	31%	32%	33%	38%
4	29%	33%	32%	40%
5	28%	24%	33%	32%
6	22%	29%	26%	39%
7	36%	52%	40%	55%
8	39%	44%	42%	53%
9	36%	45%	42%	52%
10	47%	51%	55%	60%
11	44%	48%	51%	58%
12	30%	37%	40%	50%
13	34%	36%	38%	43%
14	36%	39%	40%	46%
15	38%	45%	43%	50%
16	22%	24%	27%	30%
17	34%	33%	38%	38%
18	45%	41%	50%	46%
NC State	33%	37%	38%	44%

Table 4. Percent of Children by Age Enrolled in a 4- or 5-Star Programs (Centers and Homes)

Region	Enroll Infants/Toddlers		Enroll Preschoolers	
	2005	2008	2005	2008
1	22%	13%	34%	42%
2	34%	36%	40%	56%
3	27%	34%	36%	49%
4	38%	44%	45%	63%
5	23%	23%	42%	44%
6	21%	27%	39%	53%
7	49%	66%	53%	67%
8	46%	49%	52%	64%
9	44%	51%	55%	61%
10	60%	59%	71%	67%
11	62%	64%	72%	80%
12	41%	56%	58%	71%
13	35%	40%	40%	50%
14	41%	44%	48%	57%
15	41%	53%	49%	60%
16	26%	29%	40%	48%
17	49%	49%	58%	57%
18	51%	45%	60%	59%
NC State	40%	46%	49%	58%

- At the state level there is a 12% average difference in preschoolers accessing 4- or 5-star care vs. infants and toddlers. Among the regions, however, the differences range from 1% in Region 7 to 29% in Region 1.
- Across the regions of North Carolina the percent of infants and toddlers enrolled in 4- or 5-star licensed centers varies greatly. Across the state the percentages range from 62.28% in Region 7 to 8.06% in Region 1 (Table 5).
- Regions 7 and 17 contain the counties with the largest population in North Carolina (Mecklenburg and Wake). Both regions are above the state average enrollment of infants and toddlers in 4- or 5-star centers.
- Regions 13 and 14 contain the counties with the 3rd and 4th largest population in North Carolina (Forsyth and Guilford). Both regions are below the state average enrollment of infants and toddlers in 4- or 5-star centers.
- Region 5 contains the county with the 5th largest population in North Carolina (Cumberland). Region 5 is below the state average enrollment of infants and toddlers in 4- or 5-star centers (18.92%).

Table 5. Percent of Infants/Toddlers in Licensed Care Enrolled in 4- or 5-star Centers

Ranking	Region	%
1	7	62.28%
2	11	57.52%
3	10	57.24%
4	12	53.21%
5	9	47.69%
6	17	46.06%
7	15	45.72%
8	8	43.87%
	State	41.36%
9	4	40.94%
10	14	39.98%
11	18	37.46%
12	13	35.89%
13	2	31.06%
14	3	27.14%
15	16	25.15%
16	6	20.81%
17	5	18.92%
18	1	8.06%

- Across the counties of North Carolina the percent of infants and toddlers enrolled in 4- or 5-star licensed centers depicts an even larger range. Ashe, Hyde, Avery, Jackson, Transylvania, and Burke counties have the highest percent (70% or more) of infants and toddlers enrolled in 4- or 5-star licensed centers and Tyrrell, Pasquotank, Camden, Bertie, and Vance counties have the lowest (3% or lower) (Table 6).
- Among the counties in North Carolina with the largest populations, one (Mecklenburg) is ranked in the top 10, Wake County is ranked 26th, Guilford County is ranked 44th, Forsyth County is ranked 45th and Cumberland County ranks 82nd in the state.

Table 6. Percent of Infants/Toddlers in Licensed Care Enrolled in 4- or 5-star Centers*

Ranking	County	Region	%	Ranking	County	Region	%
1	Ashe	12	87.18%	51	Stokes	13	36.60%
2	Hyde	2	78.95%	52	Columbus	4	36.58%
3	Avery	11	77.78%	53	Duplin	5	36.50%
4	Jackson	10	75.84%	54	Henderson	9	35.70%
5	Transylvania	9	73.81%	55	Edgecombe	18	34.59%
6	Burke	11	72.93%	56	Martin	3	34.27%
7	Rowan	7	69.27%	57	Jones	3	34.21%
8	Watauga	12	66.39%	58	Johnston	16	33.97%
9	Mecklenburg	7	65.75%	59	Caswell	15	33.90%
10	Brunswick	4	64.29%	60	Alamance	15	33.03%
11	Orange	15	60.16%	61	Cleveland	8	29.84%
12	Graham	10	58.97%	62	Rockingham	14	27.86%
13	Haywood	10	58.60%	63	Craven	2	27.14%
14	Macon	10	56.93%	64	Yancey	11	25.97%
15	Clay	10	56.45%	65	Chatham	16	25.49%
16	Stanly	7	54.53%	66	Moore	6	25.18%
17	Alexander	12	54.44%	67	Greene	3	24.86%
18	Catawba	8	54.35%	68	Northampton	1	23.74%
19	McDowell	11	53.33%	69	Wayne	16	23.52%
20	Carteret	3	53.27%	70	Sampson	5	22.78%
21	Union	7	53.17%	71	Nash	18	21.93%
22	Montgomery	6	52.66%	72	Robeson	5	20.77%
23	Madison	9	52.27%	73	Scotland	5	20.45%
24	Alleghany	13	51.14%	74	Lenoir	3	20.41%
25	Beaufort	2	51.09%	75	Warren	18	19.48%
26	Wake	17	50.98%	76	Hertford	1	18.18%
27	Caldwell	11	49.50%	77	Gates	1	17.65%
28	Cabarrus	7	49.49%	78	Richmond	14	16.84%
29	Polk	9	49.38%	79	Yadkin	13	16.43%
30	Wilson	18	49.36%	80	Harnett	16	16.25%
31	Cherokee	10	49.34%	81	Lee	16	16.16%
32	Buncombe	9	49.28%	82	Cumberland	5	15.34%
33	Person	15	48.50%	83	Anson	6	14.55%
34	Lincoln	8	48.40%	84	Washington	2	14.16%
35	Randolph	14	47.04%	85	Pitt	3	13.89%
36	Rutherford	9	47.00%	86	Chowan	1	13.21%
37	Durham	15	46.32%	87	Pamlico	2	13.16%
38	Iredell	12	46.14%	88	Perquimans	1	12.90%
39	Swain	10	45.15%	89	Mitchell	11	11.32%
40	Wilkes	12	43.88%	90	Bladen	4	7.87%
41	Davie	13	43.63%	91	Hoke	6	7.47%
	NC Statewide		41.36%	92	Dare	1	7.43%
42	Davidson	13	40.77%	93	Currituck	1	4.51%
43	Gaston	8	40.72%	94	Surry	13	3.47%
44	Guilford	14	40.48%	95	Granville	17	3.28%
45	Forsyth	13	40.05%	96	Vance	17	2.46%
46	New Hanover	4	39.64%	97	Bertie	1	0.00%
47	Pender	4	39.19%	98	Camden	1	0.00%
48	Franklin	17	38.77%	99	Pasquotank	1	0.00%
49	Halifax	18	38.50%	100	Tyrrell	2	0.00%
50	Onslow	3	37.77%				

*This is the number of infants and toddlers enrolled in 4- and 5-star centers only divided by the total number of infants and toddlers enrolled in all licensed care (homes and centers).

**North Carolina State Licensing Data
April 2008**

Table 7. Programs Characteristics	NC Programs Serving Children Ages Birth-5		NC Programs Serving Infants and Toddlers⁺		NC Programs Serving Preschoolers⁺	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 Star Centers	981	24%	436	14%	963	24%
5 Star Homes	457	12%	432	13%	383	14%
4 Star Centers	1,073	24%	823	27%	1,044	26%
4 Star Homes	696	19%	659	20%	562	21%
3 Star Centers	958	22%	876	28%	930	23%
3 Star Homes	696	19%	657	20%	560	21%
2 Star Centers	323	8%	296	10%	311	8%
2 Star Homes	754	20%	701	21%	596	22%
1 Star Centers	315	11%	260	8%	311	8%
1 Star Homes	877	30%	813	25%	614	23%
GS 110-106 Centers	354	7%	270	9%	353	9%
GS 110-106 Homes	N/A	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Temporary Centers	126	4%	96	3%	112	3%
Temporary Homes	8	1%	8	0%	4	0%
Special Provisional, Provisional, Probationary, Provisional GS 110- 106 Centers	39	1%	36	1%	39	1%
Special Provisional, Provisional, & Probationary Homes	6	0%	6	0%	4	0%
Total Centers*	4,169	100%	3,093	74%	4,063	97%
Total Homes**	3,494	100%	3,276	94%	2,723	78%

*Indicates the number of centers enrolling each age grouping and the percent of the total centers in the state (n=4,169).

**Indicates the number of homes enrolling each age grouping and the percent of the total homes in the state (n=3,494).

⁺The number of programs may be a duplicated number since programs enrolling infants and toddlers may also enroll preschoolers.

Table 8. NC Statewide Enrollment	#	%
Infants & Toddlers Enrolled in Centers	67,737	38.0%
Preschoolers Enrolled in Centers	110,455	62.0%
Infants & Toddlers Enrolled in Homes	9,776	61.1%
Preschoolers Enrolled in Homes	6,214	38.9%

Table 9. Enrollment by License Level	NC Birth-5 Enrollment		NC Statewide Infant and Toddler Enrollment		NC Statewide Preschool Enrollment	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 Star Centers	43,914	25%	11,471	17%	32,443	29%
5 Star Homes	2,379	15%	1,375	14%	1,004	16%
4 Star Centers	53,189	30%	20,590	30%	32,599	30%
4 Star Homes	3,370	21%	2,067	21%	1,303	21%
3 Star Centers	37,226	21%	17,315	26%	19,911	18%
3 Star Homes	3,201	20%	1,972	20%	1,229	20%
2 Star Centers	11,086	6%	5,276	8%	5,810	5%
2 Star Homes	3,389	21%	2,021	21%	1,368	22%
1 Star Centers	11,008	6%	4,687	7%	6,321	6%
1 Star Homes	3,572	22%	2,278	23%	1,294	21%
GS 110-106 Centers	16,263	9%	6,010	9%	10,253	9%
GS 110-106 Homes	N/A	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Temporary Centers	3,445	2%	1,406	2%	2,039	2%
Temporary Homes	39	0%	33	0%	6	0%
Special Provisional, Provisional, Probationary, Provisional GS 110-106 Centers	2,061	1%	982	1%	1,079	1%
Special Provisional, Provisional, & Probationary Homes	40	0%	30	0%	10	0%
Total Enrollment in Centers	178,192	100%	67,737	38%	110,455	62%
Total Enrollment in Homes	15,990	100%	9,776	61%	6,214	39%

Table 10. NC Programs Characteristics*	NC Programs Enrolling Children Ages Birth-5		NC Programs Enrolling Infants and Toddlers		NC Programs Enrolling Preschoolers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
License Level						
5 Star Centers	981	24%	436	44%	963	98%
5 Star Homes	457	13%	432	95%	383	84%
4 Star Centers	1,073	26%	823	77%	1,044	97%
4 Star Homes	696	20%	659	95%	562	81%
3 Star Centers	958	23%	876	91%	930	97%
3 Star Homes	696	20%	657	94%	560	80%
2 Star Centers	323	8%	296	92%	311	96%
2 Star Homes	754	22%	701	93%	596	79%
1 Star Centers	315	8%	260	83%	311	99%
1 Star Homes	877	25%	813	93%	614	70%
GS 110-106 Centers	354	8%	270	76%	353	100%
GS 110-106 Homes	N/A	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Temporary Centers	126	3%	96	76%	112	89%
Temporary Homes	8	0%	8	100%	4	50%
Special Provisional, Provisional, Probationary, Provisional GS 110-106 Centers	39	1%	36	92%	39	100%
Special Provisional, Provisional, & Probationary Homes	6	0%	6	100%	4	67%
Total Centers	4,169	100%	3,093	74%	4,063	97%
Total Homes	3,494	100%	3,276	94%	2,723	78%

*This is the number of programs at each star level serving the age group divided by the total programs at that level.

North Carolina Infants and Toddlers Receiving Child Care Subsidy

This section analyzes the following research questions:

- How does the number of infants and toddlers receiving subsidy compare to the number of preschoolers receiving subsidy?
- How does the number of infants and toddlers on the child care subsidy waiting list compare to the number of preschoolers waiting for subsidy?
- Do infants and toddlers receiving child care assistance access high quality care?
- Are these differences statewide or specific to certain regions and counties?

To answer these questions licensing, enrollment, and subsidy data for April 2008 were obtained from the NC Division of Child Development. Children ages birth up to 36 months receiving child care subsidy were compared to children ages three to five years old receiving subsidy.³ Each NC county Department of Social Services and/or local purchase of care agency was contacted for information about its child care subsidy waiting list.⁴

This section contains the following: data source; summary of key findings; data tables showing the comparison statewide; and tables providing comparisons for each of the 18 NC CCR&R Regions and counties across the state. In each regional data table, a column on statewide infant and toddler data is included for comparison purposes. In each county data table, a column on the regional data in which that county is located is included for comparison purposes. The data tables contain information on subsidized children enrolled in North Carolina licensed child care facilities only.⁵

Data Source

All data in this section on children receiving child care subsidy are from the North Carolina Division of Child Development licensing, enrollment, and subsidy data for April 2008. Data include children receiving state and federal funds through the Division of Child Development and state Smart Start funds provided for subsidy purposes and reported through the Smart Start Reimbursement System as having received a subsidy (enhancements scholarships were excluded to ensure an unduplicated count). Data do not include information on children that received financial assistance through independent, non-government sources or children receiving other sources of federal funds not administered through the NC Division of Child Development. Data on children waiting for child care subsidy were obtained from each local department of social services or local purchase of care agency. Agencies managing subsidy for 91 counties responded.

³ For various reasons, 2,761 children had duplicate records. These records were excluded from the analysis.

⁴ Agencies maintaining child care subsidy waiting lists for 91 counties responded; 6 of those agencies could not provide information by age of child; in 27 of the remaining 85 counties there was no child care subsidy waiting list.

⁵ 193 children ages birth to five years of age receiving subsidy were in unlicensed or out-of-state care and were excluded.

Summary of Key Findings

Across the state of North Carolina...

- 30,932 infants and toddlers receive a child care subsidy. This represents 40% of all infants and toddlers receiving care in a licensed child care facility.
- 39% of infants and toddlers in centers receive subsidy; 44% of infants and toddlers in homes are receive subsidy.
- Of these infants and toddlers receiving a subsidy, 22% of them are infants, 37% are one year-olds, and 41% are two year olds.
- 86% of infants and toddlers receiving child care subsidy are enrolled in licensed child care centers.
- 51% of children birth to five years of age receiving subsidy in licensed care are infants and toddlers.
 - 50% of children birth to five years of age receiving subsidy to attend centers are infants and toddlers.
 - 60% of children birth to five years of age receiving subsidy to attend homes are infants and toddlers.
- 43% of infants and toddlers receiving child care subsidy are enrolled in 4-or 5-star centers and homes as compared to 50% of three to five year olds receiving child care subsidy.
- In 2005, 41% of children birth to five years of age receiving child care subsidy and attending 5-star centers or 5-star homes were infants and toddlers. In 2008, 42% of the children birth-5 years of age receiving child care subsidy and attending 5-star centers or 5-star homes are infants and toddlers. This shows an increase of only 1% in three years.
- In 2005, 59% of the children birth to five years of age receiving child care subsidy and attending 5-star centers or 5-star homes were preschoolers. In 2008, 58% of the children birth to five years of age receiving child care subsidy and attending 5-star centers or 5-star homes are preschoolers. This shows a decrease of 1% in three years.
- More than half (63%) of children ages birth to five years of age waiting for a child care subsidy are infants or toddlers (Table 17).
- These statistics do not include children in the Early Head Start programs that do not receive child care subsidy to wrap around the Early Head Start day. These data also do not include More at Four children who are in licensed settings for the school day but do not receive child care subsidies to either enhance the quality of care or extend their day.

Table 11. Number and Percent of Infants/Toddlers Receiving Subsidy Who Are Enrolled in Centers and Homes

Region	Number in Centers	Percent in Centers	Number in Homes	Percent in Homes
1	720	53%	197	63%
2	493	46%	137	52%
3	1,586	46%	362	46%
4	1,313	40%	176	48%
5	2,682	48%	378	49%
6	696	45%	202	55%
7	3,301	29%	365	30%
8	1,401	38%	145	34%
9	1,367	51%	97	46%
10	653	62%	47	46%
11	738	55%	70	28%
12	916	48%	102	36%
13	1,957	43%	350	47%
14	2,067	36%	308	44%
15	1,848	39%	473	52%
16	1,527	40%	303	47%
17	2,498	30%	406	40%
18	896	44%	155	40%
State	26,659	39%	4,273	44%

Across the regions in North Carolina...

- 39% of the infant and toddler enrollment in centers in North Carolina are young children who receive a subsidy; 44% of the infant and toddler enrollment in homes receives a subsidy (Table 11).
- The range of market penetration of infants and toddlers receiving subsidy in centers by region extends from a low of 29% in Region 7 to a high of 62% in Region 10.

Region	Infant/Toddler				Preschoolers			
	2005		2008		2005		2008	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	201	21%	123	13%	288	31%	105	14%
2	248	30%	193	31%	296	32%	218	41%
3	570	28%	711	36%	619	28%	699	40%
4	651	39%	670	45%	879	43%	727	52%
5	623	20%	615	20%	819	24%	584	23%
6	145	16%	274	31%	267	25%	231	31%
7	1,691	44%	2,542	69%	2,729	51%	2,469	70%
8	827	49%	886	57%	1,253	53%	922	61%
9	569	39%	722	49%	926	48%	848	59%
10	529	64%	510	73%	662	71%	561	74%
11	533	57%	478	59%	721	62%	670	70%
12	397	41%	565	56%	583	48%	1,201	76%
13	864	32%	847	37%	1,093	36%	851	40%
14	992	37%	994	42%	1,480	42%	1,014	45%
15	817	36%	1,166	50%	1,181	45%	1,425	61%
16	481	26%	527	55%	815	35%	649	62%
17	1,045	46%	1,110	38%	1,390	51%	1,172	46%
18	829	56%	442	42%	970	61%	456	49%
NC State	12,012	37%	13,375	43%	16,971	43%	14,802	50%

- Of the 18 regions across the state, only five regions fall at or below the state overall average percentage (39%) of children receiving subsidy that are enrolled in centers; only seven regions fall at or below the state overall average percentage (44%) of children receiving subsidy that are enrolled in homes (Table 11).
- Regionally there is wide variability in the access of 4-or 5-star child care by children receiving subsidy. In 2005 and 2008, in all but one of the regions, three to five year olds receiving subsidy accessed 4-or 5-star care at a greater rate than infants and toddlers; differences within regions vary from 1% to 20%. In Region 6 in 2008 and in Region 3 in 2005, the percents were the same (Table 12).
- Region 1 has the lowest rate of access to 4- and 5-star care for infants and toddlers receiving subsidy (13%) but also the lowest rates of access for three to five year olds receiving subsidy to 4- and 5-star care (14%).
- Region 10 has the highest rate of access to 4- and 5-star care for infants and toddlers receiving subsidy (73%) but Region 12 has the highest rate of access for three to five year olds receiving subsidy (76%).

- In 2008, there is an increase in the number of regions that had 50% or more infants and toddlers on subsidy access 4- or 5-star licensed programs. In 2005, there were only three regions with 50% or more infants and toddlers on subsidy accessing 4- or 5-star licensed programs. In 2008, this number increased to seven regions.
- In seven of the regions, data by age of child waiting for child care subsidy are available for all counties in the region. In the other 11 regions, some county data were missing. If waiting list data mirrored enrollment data, one could expect about 39% of those children birth-5 years of age who are waiting to be infants or toddlers. In fact, 63% of children who are waiting are infants or toddlers (Table 13).
- Of the seven regions with complete data, in all of them, more than half of the children waiting for subsidy were infants and toddlers (ranging from 51% to 69%).
- Of the 11 regions where data are missing, in all of the regions, more than half of the children waiting for subsidy are infants and toddlers (ranging from 54% to 71%). In regions with missing data, all data from a county were excluded so missing data do not cause the data to be biased in one direction or the other.

Table 13. Number of Children 0-5 and Percent of Children who are Infants and Toddlers Waiting for Subsidy

Region	2005		2008	
	Birth-5	Infants/Toddlers	Birth-5	Infants/Toddlers
***1	490	61%	222	64%
*2	291	64%	505	58%
*3	590	61%	1,141	60%
**4	275	60%	412	68%
5	1,972	45%	2,164	60%
*6	231	59%	375	71%
7	4,134	69%	4,150	66%
*8	368	36%	700	59%
*9	371	67%	683	59%
10	0	0%	219	53%
*11	183	61%	491	56%
12	300	46%	479	51%
13	1,815	78%	1,834	69%
*14	1,518	58%	699	63%
15	1,524	66%	318	57%
*16	114	56%	493	54%
17	1,913	60%	2,305	64%
*18	361	72%	312	63%
NC State	16,450	63%	17,502	63%

*Data missing from one county in the region

**Data missing from two counties in the region

***Data missing from three counties in the region

Table 14. Number of Children 0-5 Waiting for Subsidy by Region

Region	Infants/Toddlers	Preschoolers
***1	141	81
*2	293	212
*3	684	457
**4	280	132
5	1,288	876
*6	265	110
7	2,736	1,414
*8	411	289
*9	402	281
10	115	104
*11	274	217
12	246	233
13	1,266	568
*14	443	256
15	182	136
*16	265	228
17	1,477	828
*18	195	117
NC State	10,963	6,539

*Data missing from one county in the region

**Data missing from two counties in the region

***Data missing from three counties in the region

- In every region across the state, there is a higher number of infants and toddlers on the subsidy waiting list than there are preschoolers (Table 14).
- Of the 18 regions with subsidy waiting lists, the proportion of children waiting for subsidy who were infants and toddlers ranged from 51% (Region 12) to 71% (Region 6).
- Across the regions of North Carolina the percent of infants and toddlers receiving subsidy enrolled in 4- or 5-star licensed centers varied greatly. Across the state the percent ranges from 7% in Region 1 to 70% in Region 10 (Table 15).
- Regions 7 and 17 consist of the two largest counties in North Carolina (Mecklenburg & Wake). Only Region 7 ranks above the overall percentage (38%) of infants and toddlers receiving subsidy enrolled in 4- or 5-star centers.
- Guilford, Forsyth, and Cumberland County (ranking 3rd, 4th, and 5th, respectively, in population size) are in Regions 14, 13, and 5 respectively. All three are below the overall average percentage (38%) of infants and toddlers receiving subsidy enrolled in 4- or 5-star centers.

Table 15. Percent of Infants/Toddlers Receiving Subsidy Enrolled in Licensed Care Enrolled in 4- or 5-star Centers

Ranking	Region	%
1	10	70.14%
2	7	63.83%
3	11	56.68%
4	12	53.44%
5	8	52.46%
6	9	46.65%
7	4	40.97%
8	15	41.23%
9	18	36.92%
10	14	35.71%
11	17	34.44%
12	13	30.82%
13	3	29.41%
14	16	24.59%
15	2	24.29%
16	6	20.49%
17	5	15.98%
18	1	7.09%
	NC State	38.00%

- Across the counties of North Carolina the percent of infants and toddlers receiving subsidy enrolled in 4- or 5-star licensed centers depicts an even larger range (See Table 16). Ashe (88%), Jackson (80%), Graham (80%), Clay (76%), and Macon (75%) counties have the highest percent of infants and toddlers receiving a subsidy enrolled in 4- or 5-star licensed centers and Camden (0%), Bertie (0%), Pasquotank (1%), Vance (2%), and Surry (4%) counties have the lowest.
- Among the top 6 counties in North Carolina with the largest populations, three (Mecklenburg, Wake, & Durham) are above the overall percentage (38%) of infants and toddlers receiving subsidy enrolled in 4- or 5-star centers. Guilford County ranks 55th, Forsyth ranks 69th and Cumberland County ranks 89th in the state at 9%.
- Throughout the state of North Carolina, 51% of children birth to five years of age receiving subsidy are infants and toddlers while 49% are preschoolers. The disparity of children birth to five years of age on the subsidy waitlist is far greater. Sixty-three percent of children birth to five years of age on the subsidy waitlist are infants and toddlers and 37% are preschoolers (Table 17). This distribution demonstrates the need for increased child care subsidies overall and specifically for infants and toddlers.
- The percentage of preschoolers receiving a subsidy accessing 4- and 5-star facilities is higher than the percentage of infants and toddlers receiving a subsidy (Table 18) in both centers and homes.

Table 16. Percent of Infants/Toddlers Receiving Subsidy in Licensed Care Enrolled in 4- or 5-star Centers*

Ranking	County	Region	%	Ranking	County	Region	%
1	Ashe	12	88.41%	51	Stokes	13	36.84%
2	Jackson	10	80.14%	52	Halifax	18	36.39%
3	Graham	10	80.00%	53	Pender	4	35.56%
4	Clay	10	75.86%	54	Greene	3	34.74%
5	Macon	10	75.49%	55	Guilford	14	34.65%
6	Transylvania	9	73.33%	56	Duplin	5	33.33%
7	Burke	11	72.33%	57	Jones	3	31.58%
8	Alleghany	13	70.31%	58	Mitchell	11	31.43%
9	Swain	10	69.86%	59	Franklin	17	30.54%
10	Mecklenburg	7	69.69%	60	Johnston	16	29.61%
11	Rowan	7	67.93%	61	Gates	1	28.57%
12	Brunswick	4	67.61%	62	Wayne	16	27.13%
13	Cherokee	10	65.05%	63	Nash	18	26.61%
14	Catawba	8	62.48%	64	New Hanover	4	26.51%
15	Orange	15	65.99%	65	Chatham	16	26.22%
16	Haywood	10	61.29%	66	Alamance	15	25.91%
17	Union	7	60.59%	67	Richmond	6	25.52%
18	Madison	9	60.42%	68	Yancey	11	25.35%
19	Avery	11	58.49%	69	Forsyth	13	25.23%
20	Montgomery	6	57.61%	70	Rockingham	14	24.76%
21	Davie	13	56.74%	71	Sampson	5	23.08%
22	Polk	9	56.52%	72	Pamlico	2	22.73%
23	Watauga	12	56.18%	73	Robeson	5	20.92%
24	McDowell	11	54.95%	74	Craven	2	20.49%
25	Caldwell	11	54.25%	75	Harnett	16	18.66%
26	Wilson	18	53.56%	76	Moore	6	18.46%
27	Hyde	2	52.94%	77	Scotland	5	18.24%
28	Caswell	15	52.86%	78	Anson	6	18.05%
29	Carteret	3	52.38%	79	Lenoir	3	17.49%
30	Gaston	8	51.29%	80	Northampton	1	17.46%
31	Alexander	12	50.60%	81	Lee	16	17.12%
32	Randolph	14	50.57%	82	Bladen	4	16.88%
33	Davidson	13	49.79%	83	Warren	18	14.41%
34	Lincoln	8	49.74%	84	Yadkin	13	13.39%
35	Columbus	4	48.85%	85	Chowan	1	13.19%
36	Cabarrus	7	48.79%	86	Washington	2	11.29%
37	Person	15	48.67%	87	Tyrrell	2	11.11%
38	Buncombe	9	47.99%	88	Hertford	1	9.56%
39	Iredell	12	47.49%	89	Cumberland	5	9.12%
40	Martin	3	47.01%	90	Dare	1	8.33%
41	Wilkes	12	44.19%	91	Pitt	3	7.59%
42	Wake	17	41.04%	92	Currituck	1	7.35%
43	Onslow	3	40.75%	93	Granville	17	7.35%
44	Beaufort	2	40.65%	94	Hoke	6	4.55%
45	Stanly	7	40.00%	95	Perquimans	1	3.64%
46	Durham	15	39.86%	96	Surry	13	3.62%
47	Rutherford	9	39.73%	97	Vance	17	1.50%
48	Cleveland	8	38.59%	98	Pasquotank	1	0.77%
	NC Statewide		38.00%	99	Bertie	1	0.00%
49	Edgecombe	18	37.31%	100	Camden	1	0.00%
50	Henderson	9	37.06%				

*This is the number of infants and toddlers in 4- and 5- star centers only divided by the total number of infants and toddlers in all licensed care (homes and centers).

North Carolina Statewide Data April 2008

Table 17. Number and Percent of Children By Age in the Subsidy System	Infants & Toddlers		Preschoolers	
	#	%	#	%
Receiving Subsidy**	31,125	51%	29,788	49%
Waiting For Subsidy*	10,963	63%	6,539	37%

*Missing data from Bertie, Northampton, and Pasquotank counties in Region 1, Hyde County in Region 2, Columbus and Pender counties in Region 4, Anson County in Region 6, Gaston County in Region 8, Madison County in Region 9, Mitchell County in Region 11, Randolph County in Region 14, Harnett and Wayne counties in Region 16, and Edgecombe County in Region 18.

Table 18. NC Children Receiving Subsidy In Regulated Child Care by Star Rating and Age	NC Statewide 0-5 Receiving Subsidy		NC Statewide Infants & Toddlers Receiving Subsidy		NC Statewide Preschoolers Receiving Subsidy	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 Star Centers	7,828	15%	3,131	12%	4,697	18%
5 Star Homes	1,102	16%	643	15%	459	16%
4 Star Centers	17,560	33%	8,624	32%	8,936	33%
4 Star Homes	1,687	24%	977	23%	710	25%
3 Star Centers	16,591	31%	8,712	33%	7,879	29%
3 Star Homes	1,673	24%	1,024	24%	649	23%
2 Star Centers	4,131	8%	2,240	8%	1,891	7%
2 Star Homes	1,252	18%	746	17%	506	18%
1 Star Centers	3,093	6%	1,690	6%	1,403	5%
1 Star Homes	1,324	19%	844	20%	480	17%
Temporary Centers	1,455	3%	837	3%	618	2%
Temporary Homes	29	0%	20	0%	9	0%
GS 110-106 Centers	2,057	4%	1,033	4%	1,024	4%
GS 110-106 Homes	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Special Provisional, Provisional, Probationary, Provisional GS 110-106 Centers	744	1%	392	1%	352	1%
Special Provisional, Provisional, & Probationary Homes	23	0%	19	0%	4	0%
Total Subsidized Children Enrollment in Centers**	53,459	88%	26,659	86%	26,800	90%
Total Subsidized Children Enrollment in Homes**	7,090	12%	4,273	14%	2,817	9%

**Children with no license number listed are included in the total number receiving subsidy listed on the top table, but they are not included in the data in the bottom table.

Conclusion

Accessibility of Infant Toddler Care

In North Carolina, most infants and toddlers enrolled in regulated care (87%) are in child care centers. This percentage has increased in the last three years, up from 85% in 2005. Yet at the same time, fewer centers are enrolling infants and toddlers. In 2005, 78% of centers enrolled infants and toddlers; three years later, this had decreased to 74%. Slightly more family child care homes (94%) were enrolling infants and toddlers in 2008 than in 2005 (92%). Actual enrollment of infants and toddlers in regulated child care programs increased only slightly by 1.4% during this three-year period, unlike the enrollment for preschoolers, which increased by 5.6%.

Supply of infant and toddler care is not keeping pace with demand. Data from child care resource and referral agencies across the state for FY 2008 found that families were looking for care for 23,784 infants and toddlers. This represents 64% of the children from birth to five years of age whose families sought child care referrals in FY 2008. Yet infants and toddlers only make up 40% of the children from birth to five years of age in regulated child care. Between 2005 and 2008, the population of children from birth through four years of age in North Carolina grew 6%.⁶ Slots available for and used by preschoolers kept up with population growth; slots for infants and toddlers did not. Overall, the high demand for infant/toddler care as evidenced by requests for referrals coupled with the insufficient growth in slots for these same children has left many parents struggling to find sufficient care for their babies.

Quality of Infant/Toddler Care

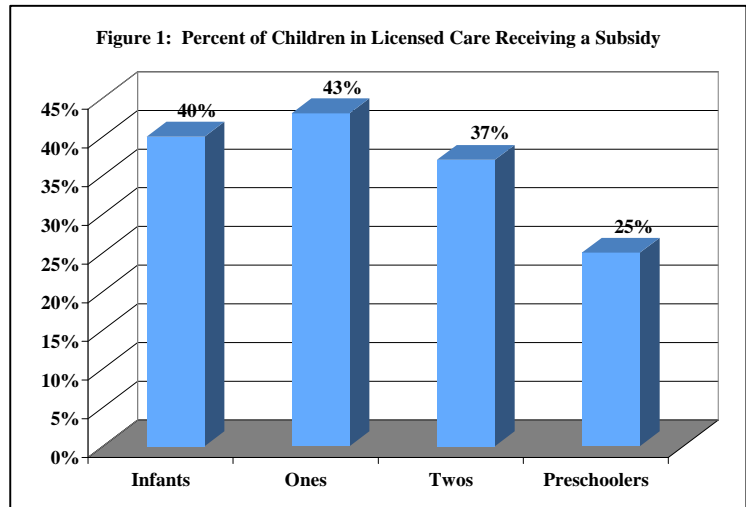
With the transition from the three-component to the two-component license system almost complete by April 2008, it is clear that efforts to maintain or improve quality have been successful in most counties. In 2005, 40% of infants and toddlers in regulated care were in 4- or 5- star centers or homes. By 2008, that percentage had increased to 46%. While this reflects a great increase in quality of care for our youngest children, the reality is that preschoolers in regulated care are seeing an even greater increase in quality. In 2005, 49% of preschoolers were in 4- or 5- star programs; three years later, this had increased to 58%. While the gains in both age groups represent strides in improving quality, the disparity between the quality of care received by infants and toddlers compared with preschoolers has become larger in the last three years. In 2005, there was a nine percentage point difference between the two age groups; in 2008, that percentage point difference has increased to twelve.

Affordability

About 40% of infants and toddlers in regulated child care are supported with a child care subsidy through the state's subsidized child care program. A much higher percent of the infant and toddler regulated market is supported with child care subsidy than the preschool market (Figure 1). Most of the infants and toddlers receiving subsidy (86%) are enrolled in child care centers. Most of the children from birth to five years of age (63%) who are waiting for a child care subsidy are infants and toddlers.

⁶ LINC Topic Report: Population by Age, Race, and Sex North Carolina, NC State Data Center, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2008

Infants and toddlers receiving a child care subsidy are less likely to be enrolled in a 4- or 5-star program than preschoolers receiving a subsidy. In April 2008, half of all preschoolers receiving child care subsidies were in 4- or 5-star programs compared to only 43% of infants and toddlers. This data does not include children in licensed child care who are funded by More at Four or Head Start and who do not receive a child care subsidy. Since most More at Four and Head Start sites have four or five stars, the discrepancy between the care infants and toddlers with low incomes receive and the care preschoolers with low incomes receive is even greater. Quality has improved for infants and toddlers receiving subsidy since 2005, when only 37% of infants and toddlers were in 4- and 5-star care. However, quality has also improved for preschoolers and the discrepancy between the two grew a little larger in the last 3 three years, from a 6 percentage point difference to a 7 percentage point difference.



Disparity Across North Carolina

There is great disparity among regions and counties in the availability of high quality care for all infants and toddlers. In Region 1, only 8% of infants and toddlers in regulated child care are in 4- or 5-star licensed care; in Region 7, 62% of infants and toddlers in regulated child care are in 4- or 5-star licensed care. In four rural counties in our state, no infants and toddlers (0) in regulated child care are in 4- or 5-star centers; in four rural counties, 75% or more of infants and toddlers in regulated child care are in 4- or 5-star centers. The discrepancy between urban counties is not quite as large, but it is still very significant, with 66% of infants and toddlers in regulated child care in 4- or 5-star centers in Mecklenburg County and only 15% of infants and toddlers in regulated child care in 4- or 5-star centers in Cumberland County.

The discrepancy of care for infants and toddlers receiving child care subsidies between counties and regions is also great. In Region 1, only 13% of infants and toddlers receiving a child care subsidy are in 4- or 5-star licensed care; in Region 7, 69% of infants and toddlers receiving a child care subsidy are in 4- or 5-star licensed care. Thirteen counties have less than 10% of their infants and toddlers who receive a child care subsidy in 4- or 5-star centers; thirteen counties have 65% or more of their infants and toddlers who receive a child care subsidy in 4- or 5-star centers.

Recommendations

Since 2005, the state of North Carolina has made great strides in improving the quality of care for children birth to five years of age. Preschoolers have seen a great increase in the quality and availability of care in the last three years. However, the improvement in quality and availability of care for infants and toddlers has not been as great. The development of children is at its most critical point during the ages of birth to three years, and though the quality of care for this age group has increased in the last three years, there is much room for improvement. These recommendations provide a solid foundation for increasing the quality of care for all of North Carolina's young children.

1. Further study is needed. In 2005, data were available on the early childhood workforce. A workforce study has not been done since 2003. Consequently, this reexamination was unable to fully explore the characteristics of child care providers in relation to age of children in care and those who did and did not receive subsidy. In addition, because all sites had not transitioned to the two-component license system, data on education and program quality points could not be compared. Finally, data is needed on the discrepancy of some counties that are able to serve a high proportion of all children and/or children receiving a child care subsidy in higher quality care and other counties with similar demographics that are not.
2. Incentives for expansion of 4- and 5-star slots for infants and toddlers are needed to meet the needs for high quality care. Such incentives may include sufficiently funded grants for expansion or development of high quality infant and toddler slots, higher subsidy rates for infants and toddler slots in four and five star programs, and supplemental rates for high quality care for all children.
3. Employers and consortia of employers should be encouraged to support the development and/or provision of high quality infant/toddler slots for their employees.
4. Subsidized rates for infants and toddlers in four and five star programs need to be raised to reflect the real rates being charged for that type of care. Funding from More at Four has helped increase the quality of spaces for preschoolers. A similar infusion of dollars needs to be available to ensure that infants and toddlers living in low-income families have access to the very best care. Additional federal Head Start dollars to support the expansion of Early Head Start could help increase the development of and access to higher quality child care for infants and toddlers.
5. The Performance Based Incentive System within the Smart Start system needs to specifically address the needs of infants and toddlers for high quality infant and toddler care in all counties.
6. North Carolina's Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit needs to be raised to more accurately reflect the high cost of high quality infant/toddler child care. Currently the maximum amount on which the credit is based for child care expenditures for one child is \$3,000 a year. This is far below what it costs in every county for high quality infant and toddler care. The Credit should be raised for families of infants and toddlers using four- and five-star care to at least \$6,000 a year. This will help low and middle income

families who are not able and/or eligible to access child care subsidy to access higher quality care.

7. Current efforts to address the accessibility, quality and affordability needs of infants and toddlers in regulated child care need to be continued.

Appendix A

Appendix A
North Carolina Regional Child Care Resource and Referral System
County and Region List

Region 1	Region 5	Region 10	Region 14
Bertie County	Cumberland County	Cherokee County	Guilford County
Camden County	Duplin County	Clay County	Randolph County
Chowan County	Robeson County	Graham County	Rockingham County
Currituck County	Sampson County	Haywood County	Region 15
Dare County*	Scotland County	Jackson County	Alamance County
Gates County	Region 6	Macon County	Caswell County
Hertford County	Anson County	Swain County	Durham County
Northampton County	Hoke County	Region 11	Orange County
Pasquotank County	Montgomery County	Avery County	Person County
Perquimans County	Moore County	Burke County	Region 16
Region 2	Richmond County	Caldwell County	Chatham County
Beaufort County	Region 7	McDowell County	Harnett County
Craven County	Cabarrus County	Mitchell County	Johnston County
Hyde County	Mecklenburg County	Yancey County	Lee County
Pamlico County	Rowan County	Region 12	Wayne County
Tyrrell County	Stanly County	Alexander County	Region 17
Washington County	Union County	Ashe County	Franklin County
Region 3	Region 8	Iredell County	Granville County
Carteret County	Catawba County	Watauga County	Vance County
Greene County	Cleveland County	Wilkes County	Wake County
Jones County	Gaston County	Region 13	Region 18
Lenoir County	Lincoln County	Alleghany County	Edgecombe County
Martin County	Region 9	Davidson County	Halifax County
Onslow County	Buncombe County	Davie County	Nash County
Pitt County	Henderson County	Forsyth County	Warren County
Region 4	Madison County	Stokes County	Wilson County
Bladen County	Polk County	Surry County	
Brunswick County	Rutherford County	Yadkin County	
Columbus County	Transylvania County		
New Hanover County			
Pender County			

*In the 2005 study, Dare County was located in Region 2.

This publication was written by Child Care Services Association's staff: Mary Carpenter, Mary Martin and Sue Russell. It was based on the 2005 study written by Erin Reiter and Teresa Derrick. Child Care Services Association is a member of the NC Child Care Resource and Referral Council, working to improve access to higher quality child care for all children.

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